



Island Operations in Greenland

Challenged by the Sectorialisation of Infrastructure

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Island Operations in Greenland – Challenged by the Sectorialisation of Infrastructure

In socio-economic terms, Greenland belongs to the world's most complex and challenging - and therefore expensive - communities. In practice all 73 Greenlandic towns and settlements more or less operate as isolated island economies and consequently as island-operated societies. This presents some unique management and engineering challenges. Every town or settlement has its own power plant, water supply system etc. Based on the limited transport infrastructure it is not possible to commute on a daily basis between.

During the period of independence (Home-rule) the previous colonial infrastructure system run by Greenland Technical Organization (GTO) and Royal Greenlandic Trade (KGH) has been transformed into segmented public owned companies that restricted the single company to focus on their individual competences area but over the years it has resulted in a general loss of competences on a series of cross-sector areas. The tendency of sub-optimizing in the single company combined with the wish to run on market conditions have resulted in an increase of services and lowered prices in the larger towns. In contrast, the smaller settlements and remote districts have experienced a decrease in services and growing prices.

The general technical and economical consequences of the Greenlandic island operations will be discussed and coupled to the settlement pattern and utilization of local natural resources and the local development dynamic, and the applicability of using market mechanism as a management tool will be questioned. Additionally the consequences of the sectorialisation of infrastructure and lack of coordination between different companies will be problematized.

Om Kåre Hendriksen

Associate Professor, PhD Kåre Hendriksen has since the late 1980s periodically helped to develop the Greenlandic vocational training, participated in environmental and sustainability projects, and researching the link between residence and business bases in Greenland. Kåre Hendriksen is Associate Professor at the Arctic Technology Centre and teaches in Sisimiut and the DTU in Denmark.